



PUBLIC RELATIONS

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THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE RECEIVES \$500,000 GRANT FROM THE PEW CENTER FOR ARTS & HERITAGE TO SUPPORT TRANSFORMATIVE NEW DIGITAL MEDIA INITIATIVE

INNOVATIVE MOBILE APP TO LAUNCH SUMMER 2016

PHILADELPHIA January 28, 2016—The Franklin Institute, the most visited museum in Pennsylvania, has been awarded an Advancement grant of \$500,000 from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage to support an expansive digital media initiative that aims to transform how museums use digital tools to engage audiences both within the museum and online. As one of the leading science centers in the country, specialized in providing high-quality, hands-on exhibits and rich STEM-based experiences, The Franklin Institute will leverage those strengths to research, test, and launch new digital technologies, including virtual reality and experiential media that will enrich every visitor experience—beginning with an innovative mobile museum app, expected to launch Summer 2016. With greater details and specific timelines soon to be announced, the Institute’s long-term digital strategy will include new approaches for creation of original science content that expands its reach and mission to a national and global audience.

The Institute embarked on this transformative digital strategy in 2015 with the hiring of Chief Digital Officer Susan Poulton and the formation of a dedicated digital team. Poulton has 20 years of experience in online content development, most recently as National Geographic Society’s vice president of digital media. “I’m excited by the enormous potential museums have to be a catalyst for emerging technologies,” Poulton said. “The Institute will develop these experiences in new mediums and deliver them to expanded audiences, placing museums at the forefront of the digital content revolution.”

The Franklin Institute has been successfully integrating digital experiences into its exhibits for several years, most recently through the nationally recognized, award-winning “Best Exhibit” *Your Brain*. Another project, the Institute’s National Science Foundation-funded Augmented Reality for Interpretive & Experiential Learning (ARIEL) project, resulted in the use of augmented reality to help visitors better understand scientific concepts and in research used throughout the museum field. With the implementation of a larger and fully integrated digital approach, The Franklin Institute will now aim to infuse digital components into everything from exhibits and education programs to curatorial collections and ticketing.

“The generous support from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage for the launch of The Franklin Institute’s new digital media initiative will provide significant long-term and broad impacts, transforming the way in which the Institute interacts with the community,” explains Larry Dubinski, President & CEO of The Franklin Institute. “The Franklin Institute is enormously grateful to the Center for their direct support of our mission, which is to spark a curiosity and inspire a passion for science and technology learning, and for allowing us as an organization the opportunity to empower people to see, learn, share, and be inspired by each other.”

THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE

Located in the heart of Philadelphia, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. Pennsylvania's most visited museum, it is dedicated to creating a passion for learning about science by offering access to hands-on science education. For more information, visit www.fi.edu.

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